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# AN INTELLIGENT APPEAL FOR WOMEN

MRS. FRANCIS M. SCOTT

BEFORE THE

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE.

## Mistaking Suffragists' Clamor

For the Sentiments of the Majority.

the Mothers.

There was a hearing recently before the Senate Judiciary committee in opposition to the concurrent resolution proposing an amendment to the constitution giving women the right to vote. A committee of prominent New York women was present, including Mrs. Francis M. Scott, wife of the corporation counsel; Mrs. Douglas Robinson, Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder, Miss Elizabeth Ward and Prof. Monroe Smith, of Columbia college.

Mrs. Francis M. Scott made the principal argument, during which she said:

"We women, who are opposed to the extension of the suffrage, have felt constrained to appear before this committee, because we believe the legislative bodies to be under a misapprehension as to the attitude of the majority of our sex, toward this, one of the most important social events of the day.

"The question of the right of suffrage

is discussed by the law that the state

alone holds the power to extend the suffrage and she is only justified in extending it when her own best interests can be served thereby.

"There is a ridiculous side to this whole question, which is tacitly avoided in these public hearings as are other more serious views of the subject, but I propose to touch on both.

"We women are not supposed to be humorous, but even the most serious of us

are obliged to smile when we ask ourselves who will do our work when we are doing the men's?

"The obvious reply to that is that all women will not go into political life if

they have the ballot, any more than all men do, but as all men may and can, it

is a matter of choice.

"Legislation is for the majority and the majority of women are mothers,

whose health and strength must be given to the state during their best years, only through the medium of those lives in

whose preservation and upbringing lies the future of our country.

"It is these women—the great majority—whom we beg you to protect. The

chivalry of men belongs to them; so sure are thousands of them that you will never

place the burden of government upon their shoulders that it is difficult to per-

suade them that there is any danger of your mistaking the clamor of the suffragists

for truth, or that their still small voice should be heard above the din.

"It is true that last spring, in less than

three weeks, without solicitation, 7,000 names, nearly half of which were those

of self-supporting women, were collected and sent to the constitutional convention,

to protest against the amendment you are now considering, but I cannot give you

an idea of how difficult it was for many women to gather sufficient courage even

to put their names in a public paper.

"They confessed to a struggle before

they could make up their minds to come forward. That may have been a foolish

feeling—it is not for me to criticize—it is at least one which most women under-

stand. These women do not want publicity, they do not want to be mixed up in

politics, they just want to be women and do a woman's work, and they are the

great majority of our sex, and they should be respected.

"This question is often confounded

with that of the higher education. Believe me, they have nothing whatever

to do with one another. The ballot in itself is not an educational force, as

you men very well know, nor is it a wand with which to turn all rascals

into purity. It is simply a part of the machinery of the state, a very un-

pleasant part, costing an enormous amount, but the only way we know of

giving to a few representative men the power to legislate for all. The laws of

the state have now given women so much that any attempt to alter her

position, would, in the cause of justice, have to begin by taking away, not add-

ing to her rights. To many young and emotional persons, change is mistaken

for progress.

"I approach the question of morality

with natural hesitation. It and our physical disabilities are the points I spoke

of earlier as being ignored when this question is seriously discussed, and yet

unless considered, this question cannot be properly dealt with.

"Who does not realize the present disinclination for motherhood which

possesses so many of our younger generation, and who can see it without

alarm? It can be traced to this restless desire for life outside the home.

When motherhood is spoken of with contempt, when a home life is con-

sidered too dull to be endured, when the ambition of the intellectual life be-

comes so warped as to be dissatisfied with any outlet but that of public life,

what is to become of the future?

"Do what we may, say what we can,

we cannot break down the barrier of sex which indicates the parting of the

ways.

"Build up the wall of the law about

us, seeking and accepting our counsel meanwhile; protect the homes, which

we women alone can make for you, open to us every door for our education

and advancement, but do not put upon the shoulders of women the muskets

they are too weak to carry, nor the burden of the government which was

constituted to protect them; do not force them to undertake an undue share

of the world's work.

"I leave this matter in your hands,

with confidence—I am a woman, speak-

ing for my silent sisters, appealing to you to leave us the liberty we might

demand, begging you not to give your sanction to a retrogressive action, by

breaking down the barrier experience

has built between our sex, and, but as

you go on becoming nobler, finer men,

carrying on the active part of the

world's work, let us too progress, be-

coming every decade abler and more

intellectual women, better and better

fitted to help and counsel, but never

your rivals, never partakers in the

eager strife of public life."

